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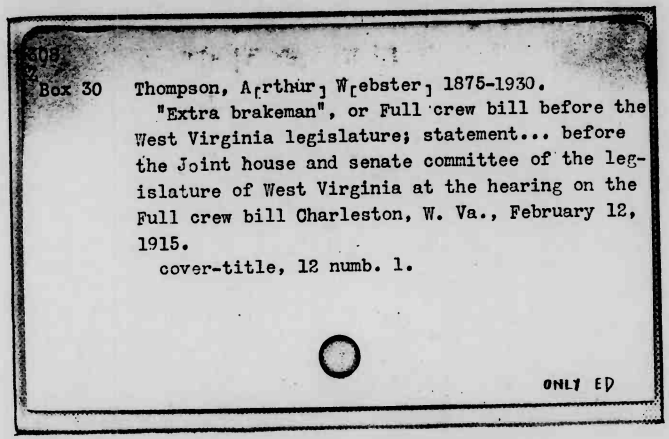

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"EXTRA BRAKEMAN"

OR

FULL CREW BILL

BEFORE THE

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

STATEMENT BY

A. W. THOMPSON
THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT
IN CHARGE OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD

BEFORE THE

JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEE

OF THE

LEGISLATURE OF WEST VIRGINIA

AT THE HEARING ON THE

FULL CREW BILL

CHARLESTON, W. VA., FEBRUARY 12, 1915

STATEMENT OF A. W. THOMPSON, THIRD VICE PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF OPERATION & MAINTENANCE, BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD, BEFORE THE JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF WEST VIRGINIA, AT THE HEARING ON THE FULL CREW BILL, CHARLESTON, W.VA.

FEB. 12, 1915.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: In appearing before your Committee in connection with the so-called Full Crew Bill of West Virginia, I do so principally for the purpose of presenting to your Honorable Body some facts pertinent to railways in general and having particular reference to its application to the Baltimore & Ohio. I desire to state first that as a railroad the Baltimore & Ohio is not opposing railroad legislation, but wishes to co-operate in bringing out facts in order that an injustice may not be done the railroads, and also to assist in making railway regulations fair and equitable.

I wish further to state that we have no quarrel with our men, and in reference to this particular bill to say that the men on the Baltimore and Ohio are divided in their sentiment and opinion, many agreeing with the officers that such a bill is unnecessary, as I will endeavor to explain.

It would seem pertinent to say that to some extent at least the word "brakeman" has almost become a misnomer on railroads. There

is practically no braking to do, hand brakes being used generally in emergencies only, and during a large portion of the time, probably 95 per cent of it, a brakeman while on duty has nothing to do with hand brakes. The exceptions are on parts of two of the seventeen divisions on the System. Here hand brakes supplement the air brakes, and under such conditions there has been provided more than the force contemplated by this bill, which includes an extra brakeman as well as special supervision for handling trains down the mountains.

In applying the terms of this so-called Full Crew Bill to the business of the Baltimore and Ohio for the year ended June 30th, 1914, the result would have been an increased annual operating cost as follows:-

Extra freight brakemen	$74,582
Extra passenger brakemen	26,513
Conductors on light engines	57,500
TOTAL	$158,595

The Baltimore and Ohio has 1082 miles of railroad in the State of West Virginia and has an estimated investment of $77,000,000. The mileage is the greatest and the investment the largest of any railroad in the State. The taxes amounted to three quarters of a million dollars last year. Development has been particularly rapid in this State in the past five years, during which period the Baltimore and Ohio has expended more than $25,000,000.

COMPARISON OF OPERATIONS WITH CONDITIONS A FEW YEARS AGO

In the past ten years a great change has come about in the operation of trains, particularly on trunk lines of great density of traffic, such as the Baltimore and Ohio, and such as exists on some of its lines in the State of West Virginia, all passenger trains having been equipped with automatic air brakes many years ago. With some exceptions, in case of bad order cars, all freight trains are equipped with 100 per cent automatic air brakes, including the caboose, in which there is an air gauge and brake valve. It is only on descending grades on mountain divisions that hand brakes are used, and then only for a short distance, the longest on the Baltimore and Ohio being about seventeen miles. The rapid increase in double-track, with third and fourth freight tracks, equipped with automatic block signal systems on a large portion of the line, and manual block system on all parts of the remainder of the line, has brought about greater safety as well as less work for train crews. The new signal indication operations on many parts of the Baltimore and Ohio lines have left a minimum amount of work for the train crews to perform, in that trains are started out from a terminal and the movement then governed entirely by the indication of signals, and not as formerly, by train order. Trains are kept moving in this way, and are diverted to freight running tracks, sidings, etc., under direction of the dispatcher.

EXTRA BRAKEMAN NOT NECESSARY EXCEPT IN FEW CASES

The title, "Full Crew Bill", generally leaves the impression that the railroads have not provided a sufficient number of men to man their trains, or to make full crews. It would seem that, "Extra Brakemen", would more clearly imply what this bill has reference to. It is recognized by the management of the Baltimore and Ohio that in certain service an extra brakeman is necessary in order to handle the business safely, and in some cases economically, and under such conditions has been provided for. Necessary brakemen are provided on passenger trains to take care of the traveling public. On some excursion trains and on some special trains an extra brakeman is frequently added as circumstances warrant. On some trains on certain portions of the road, during heavy travel, there are placed two conductors and frequently one conductor and one ticket collector as well as an additional brakeman. With special movements, such as a number of sections of heavy excursion trains for the movement of State Militia or Government troops, special officers as well as extra brakemen are placed on the trains for the protection and convenience of the patrons of the Company.

During the year ended June 30th, 1914, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad handled 23 million passengers. This number was handled without one being killed in a train accident; in fact not a passenger has been killed on the Baltimore and Ohio in the past six years.

Light engines are moved over the Baltimore and Ohio infrequently and only at such times as are necessary, such as engines going to shop and helper engines on grades returning to their station after having performed helper service which is of short trips only. Generally, where engines cover a distance of fifty miles or more, a flagman is placed on the engine to give flag protection should occasion arise for so doing. In many cases the locomotive is held and double-headed home to reduce the number of units moving over tracks.

FREIGHT BRAKEMEN

A crew on a freight train ordinarily consists of one engineman, one fireman, one conductor, one front brakeman and one rear brakeman or flagman. On trains such as local freights, mine runs and wreck trains, an additional brakeman is provided, and in some cases two additional brakemen are used. Trains are made up in terminals and inspected by car inspectors, particularly in regard to air brakes and safety appliances. The front brakeman, who rides on the locomotive, opens switches, cuts the train for road crossings when necessary and performs the inspection on line. The rear brakeman, who rides in the caboose, closes switches, protects the train by flag and performs such inspection as he can. The conductor is in charge of the brakemen and also cares for the card manifests. All trains are equipped with air brakes operated by the enginemen, the air brakes being inspected at every terminal by a force provided for that

purpose. Additional inspection is given on line of road by the conductor and brakemen, which is incidental to their work. Only in unusual instances, and particularly on descending heavy mountain grades, are brakemen required to do any braking by hand, and a sufficient number of men are employed on all trains as well as in all branches of service to take care of the business of the Company safely, comfortably and expeditiously.

In the past few years the Baltimore and Ohio has spent many millions of dollars, reducing grades and curves, upbuilding the roadbed, installing automatic signals and providing heavier equipment as well as increasing safety appliances, all of which has resulted in safer operations and fewer deaths and personal injuries to both the employes and the traveling public, and it has also resulted in a reduction in the amount of work a crew has to perform. At the same time, the wages of the trainmen in the past ten years have been increased 25 per cent, notwithstanding the lessened hazard, the lessened amount of work performed and the decreased time on line of road. In addition to this, under the Federal law, except in special emergency cases, trainmen are not permitted to remain on duty for more than sixteen hours. The Baltimore and Ohio has strictly complied with the law. There will be some accidents from time to time from various causes, such as broken parts of equipment and broken rails, which, so far, the management has not been able to prevent, and they

will undoubtedly happen in the transportation business in the future. When trains break-in-two it is, of course, necessary that the conductor and brakeman respond promptly in order to get the train moving. These breaks-in-two are becoming less frequent, because of the larger percentage of steel and steel underframe equipment in service. In 1910 the freight equipment of the Baltimore and Ohio was 39 per cent steel and steel underframe. Today 82 per cent of the equipment is steel and steel underframe. This indicates progress and development in better equipment on the Baltimore and Ohio which necessarily decreases the number of breaks-in-two.

While greater efficiency has been sought and much has been accomplished, the result has been largely offset by the increased wages in train service. This has increased the cost per train mile. In addition, there have been large expenditures made on account of adding many safety appliances. There has also been an increased cost by reason of the hours of service law, etc. In this state alone there has been an increase of 170 per cent in taxes in the past nine years. We feel that it is necessary for the best interests of the community as well as of the Railroad Company to consider seriously the situation before permitting further legislation which adds unjust and unnecessary additional expense to the railroads. In the states where the Full Crew Bill is now in effect, while it varies in form in some cases from the Full Crew Bill as proposed in West

Virginia, experience has shown clearly the lack of necessity of generally adding extra brakemen to passenger and freight trains.

FULL CREW LAW NOT NECESSARY

From the point of view of the management of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, for which I speak, the extra brakeman, or full crew law, is not necessary in West Virginia or any other state. As the bill now reads, an extra brakeman would have to be put on all freight trains of more than thirty cars, regardless of whether the service is on level divisions, such as along the Ohio River, or on the mountain divisions, whether the service is in congested territory or in territory where the business is light and where there are but one or two trains per day. It would also require the placing on passenger trains of five cars or more, an extra brakeman in any service, whether special, local or through.

EXTRA BRAKEMAN NOT NEEDED

As to the necessity for extra brakeman or the full crew bill in order to provide for additional safety to trains, there is considerable doubt in the minds of many of our men that the extra brakeman is necessary, and there is no doubt at all in the minds of our officers and some of our men that the extra brakeman is <u>not</u> necessary, except in such cases as have been recognized by the Baltimore and Ohio. These I have mentioned before. The addition of one

more man to all crews would not lessen the hazard in the handling of trains, but on the contrary, would increase it.

In states where the full crew or extra brakeman law is in effect it has been difficult to find a place on the train for the extra brakeman to ride with ordinary safety and where he would not interfere with and hinder the other members of the crew in the performance of their duties. Recently the Public Service Commission of the State of Maryland in investigating a circular issued by the Superintendent of one of our divisions in that State, which circular permitted the extra brakeman to ride in the cab of the locomotive in severe weather, called attention to the increased number of men in the cab of the locomotive. With the extra brakeman in the cab there were four men and you can appreciate the interference which would result with the fourth man, and while he could ride in the caboose, there are now two trainmen there, a conductor and a brakeman or flagman, which is considered sufficient for all purposes. The difficulty in designating a place for the extra man to ride is due to there being no duties for him to perform.

SAFETY FIRST MOVEMENT - SAFETY APPLIANCES

In the past three years, because of the desire of the railroads to decrease accidents and resulting loss of life and injury, the great Safety First movement was inaugurated, and in this the Baltimore and Ohio was among the first, if not the first. Since the

beginning of the fiscal year 1913 there has been expended on the Baltimore and Ohio System an average of approximately half a million dollars per year for safety appliances of various kinds. Laws which have been adopted requiring certain standard safety appliances are being met by the Baltimore and Ohio.

GENERAL RAILWAY SITUATION

I believe that the general railway situation appeals to the management of the Baltimore and Ohio in a somewhat different way possibly than to other railroad men and legislatures in the country in respect to the safest and best service for the people at an economical cost to the railroad. In this Full Crew Bill which is before your Body I desire to take this opportunity to bring out as clearly as possible the question - will the expenditures of $158,595 annually by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to meet the requirements of the Full Crew Bill, assuming that it is passed, bring to the communities in West Virginia safer and better service? We think not.

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE NECESSARY IF BILL IS PASSED

The annual expenditure which will be necessary for the proposed Full Crew Bill if passed, will be $158,595 on the Baltimore and Ohio lines in West Virginia, which, capitalized at five per cent, amounts approximately to $3,200,000. If we had the money to spend we think that it could be spent to greater advantage

to the State of West Virginia by providing additional facilities where most needed. In other words, with the obligations now on the Baltimore and Ohio, would it be wise to put this Company in a position where it would probably have to reduce its expenditures for improvements in the State of West Virginia by $3,200,000 and place this money at interest in order to provide for the annual expenditure caused by the Full Crew Bill, and put an additional man on its trains where not now needed, thus creating an economic waste? We believe not.

A canvas of the train service in West Virginia last year shows that had the extra brakeman law been in effect it would have resulted in 185 additional men employed by the Baltimore and Ohio, and this during a time of depression. It would seem to be worthy of careful consideration whether there is any real additional safety as a result of the extra brakeman law. If necessities arise in some classes of service and at some points for an additional man, some other method may be arrived at to cover such cases, and not by making a law to cover all classes of service and forcing the railroads to this quite obviously unnecessary expense.

FINAL

It is our hope that in bringing before you these facts I have helped to clarify the situation, because it has been

my purpose to lay before you fairly and frankly all the facts in my possession in connection with this matter, and I stand ready as a representative of the Baltimore and Ohio to give you any further information you desire in connection with this or any other operating feature of the railroad. In conclusion, may I urge that you consider carefully the points which stand out most clearly in this problem as affecting the State of West Virginia as well as the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad? It is the purpose of our President, Mr. Willard, to continue his progressive policy of upbuilding and adding to the facilities of the Baltimore and Ohio and it seems that much is to be done to give the necessary facilities for the proper development of your State as well as of all states through which we operate, but this cannot be as well done if the extra brakeman bill becomes a law.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing before your honorable body with the railway side of this question.

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